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# In U.S., Jesuit pride pours for Pope Francis

Brian Roewe | Mar. 15, 2013 NCR Today
Pope Francis

When Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio of Argentina stepped onto the balcony of St. Peter?s Basilica, the Catholic world met its first Jesuit pontiff.

The Society of Jesus formed in 1540 under St. Ignatius of Loyola, but never before had one of its members served the church as the Bishop of Rome. Part of that was due to the order?s oath of obedience to the pope, but also to Ignatius? own requirement not to seek advancement. Add in past Vatican suspicion of the society, it became somewhat surprising to many American Jesuits that one of their priests ascended to the Throne of Peter.

Many Jesuits in the media ? including contributing *NCR* analyst Fr. Thomas Reese [1] ? offered their takes on a fellow brother becoming pope. At TheJesuitPost.org [2], Matt Spotts recalled how Francis? first call to action brought peace into his world as it erupted with texts and alerts: ?Those of us locked in our frantic digital cycles stopped ? and then calmly lowered our screens, set down our phones, and began to pray.?

*America* magazine, a Jesuit-run publication, had extensive coverage of Francis, including former editor Fr. Drew Christiansen?s explanation why a Jesuit would pay homage to another religious order [3] ? the Franciscans ? in selecting a pontifical name.

Another of *America*?s contributors, Fr. James Martin (among the society?s most recognizable media faces), reflected on CNN.com about the seemingly improbable elevation [4] of a brother. Despite the founder?s requirement against ?climbing? for higher titles, Martin said Ignatius would smile on Francis? new role: ?Anything for the ?Greater Glory of God,? as our motto goes, and for the service of the church, Ignatius would say.?

Back at his home base, Martin also offered 10 notables about the Jesuits [5] for those looking to brush up on the background of the new pope?s order. For instance, Jesuits brought the world the trap door and tonic water; have charted the world?s largest rivers; educated the likes of Voltaire, James Joyce and Alfred Hitchcock; and even provided naming inspirations for 35 moon craters.

For many Americans, though, their knowledge of the society begins and ends with their own school ties. Education has long been a core mission of the society, and in the U.S. alone, there are 28 colleges and universities, among dozens of middle and high schools. It was these institutions where much of the media turned for local reaction, including in Boston [6], Chicago [7], Portland, Ore [8]., and Carmichael, Calif [9].

Among the Jesuit-educated is John Balboni (a Georgetown University alumni), who at Forbes.com examined the leadership traits the society instills [10] in its member priests. His list includes self-awareness (knowing one?s capabilities and limitations), ingenuity (?good leaders ? look beyond the ordinary to see what is possible.?), love (concern for others), and heroism (?make things happen?).

Balboni argued that Francis will need to bring each of these qualities to the papacy if it is going to reach ?well-

intentioned men and women who adhere to its faith but also are willing to devote themselves to its perpetuation.?

A big task, he noted, ?but if [Francis] is anything like the Jesuits who taught me, he will do a great job of it.?

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